


Student Service Fee FY22 Request Questionnaire, Blaffer Art Museum, Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts

- 1. Please provide a one-page executive summary of your questionnaire responses. This summary should include, in brief terms: your unit's mission, how you accomplish your unit's mission, and a justification of your unit's student fee allocation in terms of benefits for students.** 



The mission of the Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston is to create meaningful experiences with contemporary art that ignites wonder and curiosity, challenges pre-conceptions, and expands ways of seeing and thinking to nourish the human spirit and inspire empathy, understanding, and engagement with the world today. As a non-collecting museum that strives to be timely and topical, the Blaffer presents a continually changing schedule of exhibitions, performances, publications, public programs, and opportu-

nities for learning that drive exploration and research in contemporary art. The Blaffer serves the university community in particular by forging partnerships with academic and non-academic units to offer opportunities for student learning, engagement and career-building experience. In 2020-2021 the museum will supplement and expand its program by launching a new initiative to extend many of its efforts to an accessible and increasingly incisive virtual platform. By FY22, this robust platform will include more educational resources and programs accessed through social media, a new (and continually archived) YouTube channel, and a revamped website. The pandemic and its limiting effect upon in-person programming has been a major challenge, but we firmly believe virtual extensions will amplify the impact of on-site programs and lead to increased student engagement as the museum's activities are fully restored.

To benefit the UH student population, the Blaffer Art Museum accomplishes the following:

- Presents nationally recognized exhibitions and programs (on par with CAMH and the Menil) that consistently integrate student participation, activation, and interpretation;
- Showcases UH student art in the *UH School of Art Annual Student Exhibition* and *Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition*, both developed and presented in collaboration with students and faculty;
- Produces lively, collaborative programming for, and by students through the Blaffer Art Museum Student Association (BAMSA), established in 2005;
- Develops virtual and/or on-site interdisciplinary programs such as *Convergence Research*, *Studio Sessions*, and

Blaffer Art and Design (B.A.D.) 2.0, that generate and support student participation, learning, and art-making in a public arena;

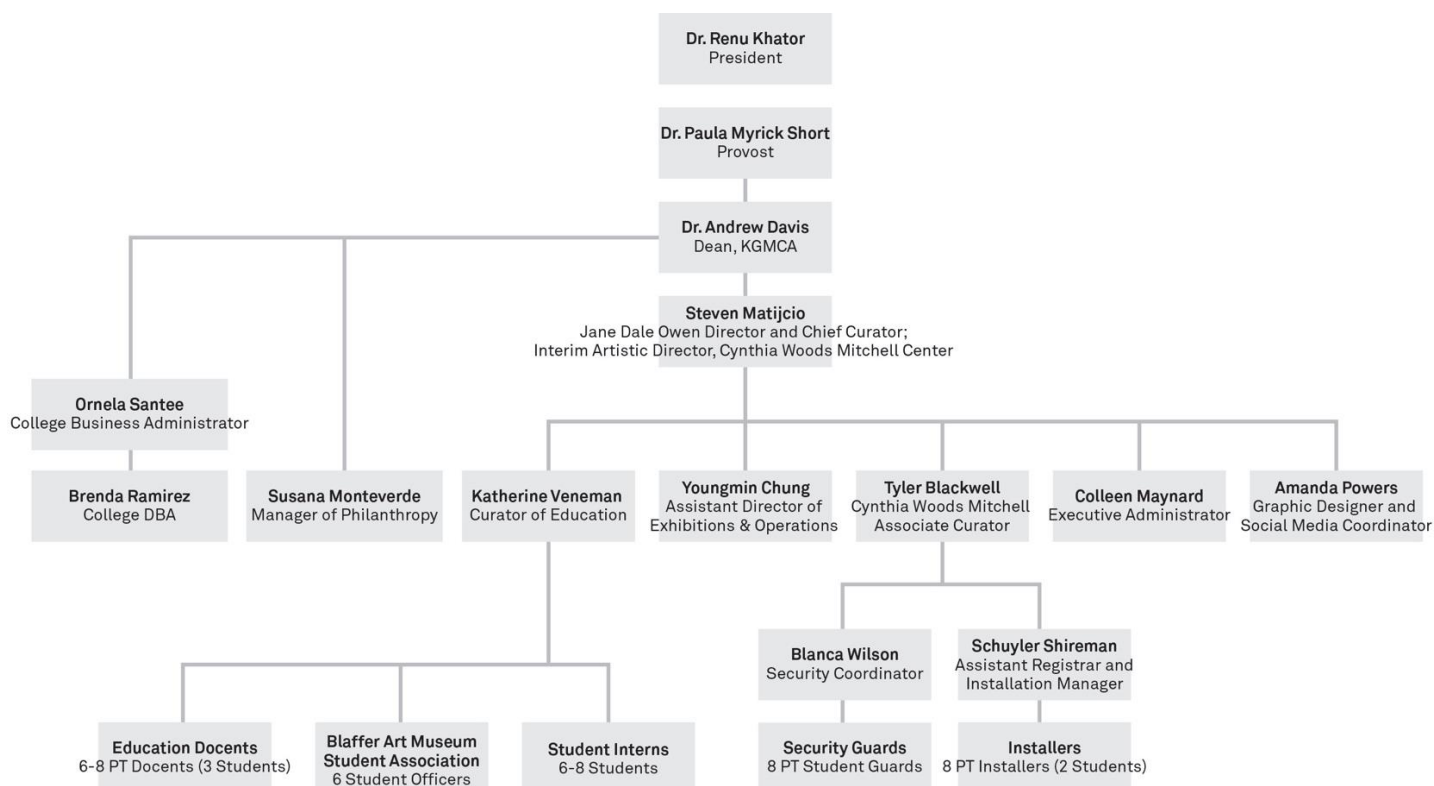
- Hosts a highly successful academic internship program where both undergraduate and graduate students receive course credit while learning important professional skills;
- Designs special, one-on-one opportunities for students to engage with exhibiting artists in class visits, workshops, and critiques;
- Organizes free public lectures and presentations that bring world-renowned artists, scholars, and arts professionals to campus and to classrooms;
- Provides free docent guided tours of exhibitions for UH classes and groups often led by our advanced undergraduate and graduate students in art, art history, and arts education.

SFAC funds support the most significant and long-standing services the Blaffer provides to the UH student community: the School of Art's *Annual Student Exhibition* and *Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition*. Each year the Blaffer hosts these expansive exhibitions (and accompanying events, including student artist talks) to gather students, friends, family, and our campus community to celebrate the next generation of rising stars. Since the reputation of the UH School of Arts graduates is local and national in scope, these high-profile exhibitions regularly generate some of the Blaffer's largest audiences year after year. For example, in 2019 the *Masters of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition* and the *Annual School of Art Exhibition* brought more than 2,250 guests to the museum in just 24 days. The Blaffer was unable to present these exhibitions in Spring 2020 due to the campus closure, but we are planning both virtual and in-person presentations for 2021. In FY22, the museum will fully reinvigorate this tradition with the benefit of newly amplified public programs and marketing strategies for digital platforms.

In addition to the student exhibitions, an important facet of the museum's service to the University student population is to present programs designed specifically for students. The Blaffer Art Museum Student Association (BAMSA) is a student-led organization established in 2005 that creates career-building opportunities for students to participate in, and make substantial contributions to the UH campus, the museum, and Houston communities. Programs such as Blaffer and Design (B.A.D) 2.0 further extend these efforts, providing the resources and platform for students in Industrial Design, Graphic Design and the School of Art to conceive, produce and sell original objects at the Museum.

The Blaffer Art Museum respectfully requests \$21,500 in base support to fund the annual student exhibitions, the Blaffer Art Museum Student Association (BAMSA), and other associated student-related programming.

2. **Organizational Chart.** Provide an organization chart of your unit. Large units may need to have an overview chart and more specific charts for each unit. Where you have multiple staff in the same position, note this on your chart. Student employees should be cited on the chart and identified as students.



In addition to a staff of nine full time staff members, the museum works closely with faculty and staff in the Katherine G. McGovern College of the Arts. The Blaffer currently engages between 25-27 students as docents, installation crew members, interns, BAMSA officers, and museum attendants/guards. Student employees and volunteers provide invaluable assistance in connecting the Blaffer with the University community and gain employment and/or professional development experience at the museum

3. **List your unit's strategic initiatives and action steps identified for the 2019-20 academic year and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services (DSAES) Strategic Initiatives and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate (links below). Please comment on your success in achieving these strategic initiatives/action steps. If a strategic initiative/action step changed during the year, please note this and explain. Also, list any new strategic initiatives/action steps, the rationale for the addition, and comment on your success in achieving these items.**



In FY 2020, SFAC funding enabled the Blaffer to sustain its essential role as a key educational campus resource. We take pride in showcasing and building the creative capabilities of students, and the museum prioritizes both UH Goals as well as Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services Strategies. The Blaffer’s key objectives (outlined below) align especially well with UH Goals of National Competitiveness, Local and National Recognition, as well as DSAES’s strategies to “develop competencies, and personal growth” and to “Expand diverse experiences on exploration and education while identifying and meeting the needs of our student population through supportive, inclusive, environments.”

Goals were to develop opportunities for student exhibitions and engagement; build partnerships within UH and the Houston community; and produce an international program of contemporary art, which lays the foundation for all of the above. All goals planned for Fall 2019 and early Spring semester of 2020 were met or exceeded. However, due to COVID-19, the museum was required to temporarily close in mid-March, and was thereby not able to realize the two spring student exhibitions, the **42nd Annual School of Art MFA Thesis Exhibition** and the **Annual School of Art Student Exhibition**. Some of the Blaffer’s other student-oriented programs, such as Blaffer Art & Design 2.0 and Studio Sessions, were also postponed due to the pandemic. Fortunately, the museum has been able to open this past September and is looking for every opportunity to re-engage UH students in-person, and online.

Due to the ongoing challenges presented by Covid-19, and the inability to organize public gatherings in the foreseeable future, the Blaffer is currently working with the UH School of Art on how best to present the spring exhibitions in 2021. The hope is to present a “double cohort” exhibition that would include participation from recent graduates who had been slated to take part in the **42nd Annual School of Art MFA Thesis Exhibition**. In addition to a physical exhibition, the Blaffer is collaborating with faculty to envision virtual exhibition options and public programming as well. In response to the museum’s previous closure and changing current events, resources in the Blaffer’s ongoing virtual program have deepened an increasingly expansive source for educational content for each exhibition. Planned cohesively across multiple platforms—including social media as well as the newly re-designed website and our YouTube channel—new opportunities for engagement are dynamic, accessible and reach across campus, city, and much further afield.

FY 2020 Goals and Outcomes:

1. **Develop opportunities for student exhibitions and engagement.** As mentioned above, the two marquee student exhibitions were unable to be realized in 2020. However, the museum did accomplish many programs for students:
 - Sponsorship and mentorship of the **Blaffer Art Museum Student Association (BAMSA)**, and its schedule of student events including the Fall Red Block Bash and Biannual Student Exhibition. The Biannual was presented in both the Fall and Spring as scheduled, extending its reach in two high profile locations: the

Student Center and the School of Theatre & Dance. These colorful and energetic community-building events drew an estimated attendance of more than 275 students. The Bash was held at the museum (in Fall only) and attracted approx. 280 students to partake in the celebration.

- Implemented six editions of the new student-driven program, **Studio Sessions**, which are free events held on the first Friday of each month in the fall and spring semesters. This program offered students guided exhibition tours, art-making workshops, complimentary food, and art-driven conversation in a welcoming, creative environment.
- Held **Convergence Research**, a new performance series encouraging students' employment of the museum as a creative, cross-disciplinary laboratory. These performances took place during the Blaffer's new extended Thursday evening operating hours (open until 8 p.m.). In 2020 the program was continued online over the summer and fall, extending the audience significantly.
- Five **Internships** completed by both undergraduate and graduate students – providing the opportunity to improve student academic studies while developing professional development skills.
- Started **My Virtual Blaffer**, a new platform for artists, and students to design a virtual exhibition at the Blaffer using installation photos of the galleries; these imagined shows are shared widely on social media.

2. The museum also developed expanded campus partnerships including:

- Exhibiting art outside the museum: To increase student awareness and engagement with exhibitions, the Blaffer began the first phase of an important initiative to extend its program across the broader campus. In spring 2020, the Blaffer partnered with Special Collections at M.D. Anderson Library to co-present artist Mariam Ghani's *Index of the Disappeared*: A site-specific installation exploring important political processes directed at people of color in the post 9/11 era; this installation was accompanied by a public talk at the Archives. In Fall 2020, the Blaffer broadened this initiative to exhibit artworks in the exhibition *Stephanie Syjuco: The Visible Invisible* in the Anderson Library (adjacent to the Honors College) and the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design. This expanded exhibition will also include video and projections in the UH Student Center.
- Partnering with the Jenkins Design, Architecture, and Art Library to offer Library Pop-Up events in tandem with Studio Sessions.
- Partnered with UH Libraries Special Collections to develop one of the Studio Sessions on Archival Film Practices.
- BAMSA developed an exciting partnership with UH Community Relations to represent UH at the Via Col-ori Street Painting Festival, a two-day city arts events attracting thousands.

3. Produced national and international exhibition program and created learning opportunities for students and public. In the Fall 2019 semester, the Blaffer hosted four important exhibitions, with staggered runs to maximize the number of days the museum was accessible to the public. The Blaffer was closed from March 17-August 31 due to the pandemic but has now successfully re-opened while implementing carefully considered safety protocols. Moreover, the museum *added* an exhibition to the schedule - **Rodney McMillian: Historically Hostile** – which ran from September 1-27, to respond to current events and the protests organized in honor of George

Floyd. Other exhibitions originally slated to open in June 2020 - **Stephanie Syjuco: *The Visible Invisible***, and **Simon Fujiwara: *Hope House*** – will now open in October 2020. The following exhibitions were accomplished:

Paul Mpagi Sepuya (October 20, 2019 – March 14, 2020). Sepuya is an African-American artist who makes photographs of friends, artists, collaborators, and himself that challenge the history of photography and deconstruct traditional portraiture through layering, fragmentation, mirror imagery, and the perspective of the black, queer gaze. This exhibition is Sepuya's first major museum survey, spanning thirteen years of his practice and tracing connections across his life and practice.

Jacqueline Nova: *Creación de la Tierra* (October 20, 2019 – January 4, 2020). Nova (1935-1975) was one of Latin America's most important, yet still under-recognized experimental musicians of the 20th century. The exhibition centers upon her rarely exhibited 1972 work *Creación de la Tierra* ("Creation of the Earth"), which was created by sonically altering a series of recordings of chants by the indigenous U'wa peoples of Northeastern Colombia. In this immersive sound installation Nova questions the political implications behind the intelligibility of speech, history, and technology.

Gareth Long: *Kidnappers Foil* (November 16, 2019 – March 14, 2020). *Kidnappers Foil* is a multi-channel cinematic installation that explores the social, cultural, and media histories of amateur American filmmaking through the lens of the itinerant Texan filmmaker Melton Barker. Between 1936 and 1976, the Dallas-born Barker traveled from town to town across the American South and Midwest, using a single script to produce hundreds of iterations of the same film. The Toronto-based artist Gareth Long presents a constellation of 12 of these films as an archive of vernacular artifacts.

Mariam Ghani: *What We Left Unfinished* (January 10 – March 14, 2020). Ghani is an Afghan-American artist, archivist, social activist, writer, lecturer and filmmaker. In her most ambitious work to date, Ghani presents the incredible and mostly true story of five unfinished feature films from the Communist era in Afghanistan (1978-1991), when films were weapons, filmmakers became targets, and the dreams of constantly shifting political regimes merged with the stories told onscreen. Alongside the film, Ghani will present archival materials accumulated in the making of the film, sister video portraits of Afghanistan, and a site-specific iteration of her ongoing archive project *Index of the Disappeared* (with collaborator Chitra Ganesh) in the Special Collections Department of MD Anderson Library.

- 4. Please discuss the means that you are utilizing to evaluate both your success in achieving the aforementioned strategic initiatives and/or action steps and their importance as compared to others that you might pursue. Where data exists, discuss the number of persons served by each of your programs and any assessment measures and/or learning outcomes used to evaluate program success.**

Until the recent freeze related to COVID-19, the Blaffer's in-person attendance has been on the rise, with a nearly 57% increase from FY18 to FY19. Moreover, the upward trend was continuing in FY20, signaling increased engagement and accessibility with the UH campus community. We believe the Blaffer will recapture this momentum in FY21 and FY 22, both in-person and online, as we continue to invest in the current initiative to increase programming on social media and digital platforms, as well as our commitment to spread the museum's programs beyond our walls. The *2019 School*

of *Art Masters of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition* and the *Annual School of Art Exhibition* brought more than 2,250 guests to the museum in just 24 days, the highest volume of museum traffic that year. As we move into 2021 with the hope of more in-person campus activity and public events, the Blaffer aims to exceed our 2019 attendance by 10%, combining in-person and online participation. In addition, we plan to grow that number in 2022 with increased investment in online infrastructure (marketing, programming, live-streaming), with the goal of extending viewership by 50%. Similarly, attendance to BAMSA-sponsored programs, which in recent years has averaged approx. 600 participants, will aim to grow by 20% for FY22 with the support of the museum's social media and campus marketing initiatives. The Blaffer will continue to adjust exhibition runs and timing, opening hours, and campus partnerships with the goal of achieving maximum visibility and the capacity to connect with students via multiple forums.

Tracking attendance at our events, exhibitions, lectures, and guided tours is traditionally the most quantifiable means to measure the Blaffer's audience reach. With Blaffer's redoubled emphasis on virtual programming this year, additional metrics will be added from YouTube and social media platforms Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Museum attendance is calculated by a twofold system. Visitors are registered upon entry into the museum through a sticker and/or clicker, and the data is collected in a simple hourly chart. This system is echoed during outdoor events, offsite lectures, or large-scale visits/openings. By always being free of charge, and prioritizing friendly, down-to-earth interactions with our guests, the Blaffer cultivates return visits and ongoing patronage. Students often make repeat visits within a short period of time to coincide with class assignments or public programming. This data is gathered into a comprehensive master spreadsheet that delineates programming and daily attendance into categories such as tours, off-site events, and student organization events. These monthly spreadsheets are organized by fiscal year (and fiscal quarters). This makes it possible to review how many people were in attendance for a category in any given week, month, quarter and/or year.

The education staff regularly consults security and visitor relations staff to ensure accurate counts at public and education programs, since there is both a general and an education/public program calendar. Accurate counting, documentation, and analysis of visitor attendance at the Blaffer is similar to comparable state institutions such as the Blanton Museum at UT and the Art Museum at Texas Southern University.

- 5. Please discuss any budget or organizational changes experienced since your last (2021) SFAC request, their impact on your programs, and your reason for implementing them. SFAC recognizes that some programs did not receive the funds that they requested, that some programs were impacted by additional expenses after the conclusion of the budget cycle, and that some programs may be ahead of or behind their self-generated income projections.**

The Blaffer advances an innovative, internationally recognized program and serves as a cornerstone for artistic education and creative entrepreneurialism in the UH campus community. In FY20, the museum developed strategies to meet the challenges posed by COVID-19, which curtailed SFAC-funded programs in the spring. After March 14 the museum was temporarily closed and unable to host the **UH School of Art Master of Arts Thesis Exhibition** and the **Annual Student Art Exhibition**, which were both scheduled in the latter part of the semester. The Blaffer and BAMSA accomplished several programs prior to March 2020, and have postponed a number of programs into 2021, including both aforementioned shows and Blaffer Art & Design 2.0. The Museum's budget remains stable, but fundraising efforts have increased to maintain existing staff, as well as the programs necessary for students to have a fulfilling and engaging experience.

Recently, there have been important changes to the Blaffer's organizational structure that will raise the museum's profile and strengthen its service to the community. In May, **Steven Matijcio, Jane Dale Owen Director and Chief Curator** of the Blaffer, was named **Interim Artistic Director of the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts** by Dean Andrew Davis at the Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts. As Matijcio continues his role at Blaffer, his new leadership appointment elevates the profile of the museum and its Director in the university community. A hiring and promotional freeze has been implemented in the McGovern College of the Arts this fiscal year, but Blaffer staff have taken on expanded roles to sustain operations. Registrar & Exhibitions Manager **Youngmin Chung** has assumed the role of **Assistant Director of Exhibitions & Operations**, and Cynthia Woods Mitchell Curatorial Fellow **Tyler Blackwell** is now operating as **Associate Curator**. **Blanca Wilson** was named **Museum Security Coordinator** and has served ably in her role to coordinate students in the vital role of visitor service at the Museum.

6. If your unit concluded FY2020 with a Student Service Fee (SSF) Fund 3 addition to the SSF Reserve in excess of \$5,000, please describe the conditions which caused the addition and provide a line-item identification of the budgetary source(s) of the addition (i.e. lapsed salary, conference travel, etc.). ^[SEP]

N/A

7. Please list your 2021-2022 strategic initiatives and action steps in priority order and cite the specific Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services Values and University of Houston Strategic Goals to which they relate. Larger units may wish to group responses by subprogram. Under each strategic initiative, please state the specific action steps (programs, activities, services, policies/procedures, etc.) that you intend to implement to accomplish your stated initiative.

In FY22, the Blaffer will continue to prioritize and practice both UH Goals and DSAES's strategies. As a gateway between UH and the City of Houston, the Blaffer lives as both an incubator and hub between students and professionals – providing opportunities for mentorship, innovation and the development of real-world creativity. Funding from SFAC allows us to build these partnerships and advance the artistic skills in students so desired in a 21st century workplace. At the same time, all museum programs focused upon students—the exhibitions, BAMSA, internships, etc. — directly address the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Services goal to champion exceptional opportunities and services to support all UH students. Additionally, the Blaffer contributes to UH's National Competitiveness with its nationally recognized exhibition program, ensuring that the student community actively engages and contributes to an outstanding research environment. The museum originates between 6-9 exhibitions annually that travel to museums nationwide, contributing to and leading national research in the art museum field and the production original publications and digital resources.

Goal 1: Develop opportunities for student exhibitions and engagement with museum resources. This initiative will be accomplished through:

- a. Realizing two spring student exhibitions, the School of Art **44th Annual MFA Thesis Exhibition** and the School of Art **Annual School of Art Student Exhibition**.
- b. Sponsorship and mentorship of the **Blaffer Art Museum Student Association (BAMSA)**, and its schedule of student programs.
- c. Implementing student-focused programs such as **Convergence Research**, which encourages students'

employment of the museum as a creative, cross-disciplinary laboratory, as well as **Studio Sessions**, which are a series of free events held on the first Friday of each month offering students guided exhibition tours and hand-on art making activities, in a welcoming, creative environment.

- d. Re-establishing **Blaffer Art & Design (B.A.D.) 2.0**. As a partnership with students and faculty in the Graphic Design (School of Art) and Industrial Design (Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture) programs at UH, students exercise their design and production skills to realize projects which are showcased and sold in the museum's lobby.
- e. Providing **Internships** will offer both undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to improve their academic studies and professional development skills.
- f. Provide training experience to student **docents, art installers, and gallery attendants**.
- g. Developing new or companion digital versions of selected in-person programs such as virtual tours.

The greatest portion of SFAC funding enables the Blaffer to realize the *UH School of Art Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition* and *UH School of Art Annual Student Exhibition*. These high-profile student-centered exhibitions give students the experience and prestige of exhibiting in a museum setting while being introduced to the larger Houston art community and beyond. The highly regarded *UH School of Art Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition* and *Annual Student Exhibition* feature more than 100 School of Art students in Graphic Design, Interdisciplinary Practice and Emerging Forms, Painting, Photography, Printmaking, and Sculpture. In 2021 and 2022, the Blaffer aims to reinvigorate this tradition and grow its visibility with newly amplified marketing strategies for digital platforms and the inclusion of added gallery space in the new Elgin St Garage building.

In addition to showcasing student work in the Blaffer's esteemed setting, student artists in the *Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition* develop leadership skills by learning professional standards and best practices of exhibiting their work in a museum. Students work extensively with museum staff while conceptualizing and realizing their thesis projects, gaining experience that prepares them to work with galleries and museums in the future. Our Gallery Talk program provides students with the added opportunity to hone their critical thinking, communication, and presentation skills by discussing their work with the campus and Houston art communities. These talks consistently attract audiences from UH as well as the Houston art world. Extending the reach of the show, each MFA exhibition is accompanied by a printed catalogue produced by the School of Art's Graphic Design program. Highly visible on campus, several works have been acquired and are displayed in the university's Student Center.

SFAC funds also provide key support for the **Blaffer Art Museum Student Association (BAMSA)**, a student-led volunteer organization that congregates a student community at the museum and presents art and performance across the campus. In FY21, plans are being made to offer student engagements via online platforms, and in FY22, the museum will re-introduce more on-site programs with the added benefit of a stronger digital presence. BAMSA's mission is "to generate and establish resume-worthy events, opportunities, and experience through active engagement in the Blaffer Art Museum." Using the museum as a catalyst, BAMSA members generate awareness of, and excitement around exhibitions, events and educational outreach programming. In so doing, BAMSA creates, implements, and sustains new endeavors in collaboration with its members, peer organizations, faculty and staff. Participation in BAMSA also offers students the opportunity to learn professional skills such as program management and budgeting, event logistics, coordination and

evaluation. BAMSA fosters opportunities for student collaboration across the arts and a variety of neighboring disciplines such as business and liberal arts. The most far-reaching program of BAMSA is the semi-annual Red Block Bash, a campus-wide celebration of UH arts held in the Fine Arts Courtyard and the museum. Produced, executed and marketed by the students, the Bash showcases student work in the visual and performing arts.

Additionally, the Blaffer offers ongoing educational support via training to **museum docents, interns, and education assistants** as well as to **installation crew members** and **gallery attendants/security staff**. Virtual tours are being developed this year, and in FY22 both in-person and virtual tours are planned for university classes as well as K-12 students and community groups. The Blaffer will continue to promote the marriage of practical and theoretical studies through academically rigorous internships at the undergraduate and graduate level. Mentored by museum staff in the education and curatorial departments, UH students complete individual and collaborative assignments related to museum exhibitions. Furthermore, many students studying in arts-related fields received professional training as members of the exhibition installation crew. These students also gain experience in marketing design and communications, as well as working in public programs. Students serve as gallery attendants/security too, utilizing front line communication skills to interact with the public while maintaining important museum safety policies.

Goal 2: Develop national and international exhibition program and create complementary learning opportunities for students. The Blaffer will develop innovative exhibitions of contemporary art that connect students and the UH campus community with a larger socio-political discourse and the global arts community. Additionally, the museum plans to increase the impact of exhibitions on campus by expanding and enriching campus partnerships to develop cross-disciplinary programs. UH students will be woven into the architecture of these efforts and will be activated as participants in shows that consistently celebrate ethnic diversity and culture-sharing. This initiative will be accomplished through the following exhibitions:

Carriers: The Body as a Site of Danger and Desire

January 23 – March 13, 2021

Organized by: Associate Curator Tyler Blackwell and Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

In the strangely unnerving and isolating circumstances of a global pandemic, many people covet the human contact – physically, socially, culturally – that most of us take for granted. And yet with the distanced conditions that covid-19 has brought to bear upon a global population, we know that bodies and breath are the primary carriers of a life-threatening disease. The human body becomes an ambivalent nexus here, coveted as a site of comfort and sanctuary, while simultaneously being feared as the incubator and disseminator of demise. To consider this conflicted terrain from an especially immediate perspective, *Carriers* will survey the body as paradox through the work of approximately 12 diverse Houston-based artists. Across a spectrum of media and techniques, they will provide a kaleidoscopic lens to consider humans being. Rather than dwelling upon this incredibly weighted subject or furthering the fatigue we are all feeling, this exhibition will thereby offer a space of catharsis, hope, and reflection.

Jamal Cyrus: The End of My Beginning

June 5 – September 18, 2021

Organized by: TSU Museum Director Dr. Alvia Wardlaw and Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

As a singular artist, an occasional curator, and a steadfast mentor, Jamal Cyrus and his influence reverberate throughout his native city of Houston. And while he has participated in a number of biennials, Cyrus' work has not yet had the platform to be comprehensively celebrated on a national scale. The Blaffer will address this overdue need and partner with Texas Southern University (TSU) to present Cyrus's first museum survey and catalog. As both an alumnus of UH and a professor at TSU, Cyrus and his work will bring together the two major universities located in Houston's predominantly African American Third Ward neighborhood to co-present an exhibition for the first time. *The End of My Beginning* will span 15 formative years of Cyrus's practice from 2005-2020, assembling approximately 40 artworks that include drawings, prints, paintings and works on both paper and papyrus as well as sculpture, textiles, installation and billboards.

Caroline Mesquita: *l'amour à la machine*

June 26 – October 9, 2021

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

Caroline Mesquita is one of the most intriguing, timely and innovative young female sculptors to emerge out of France, and the Blaffer will present her first solo museum exhibition in the United States. A jubilant disquiet presides over her sculptural work that navigates the increasing intimacy between man and machine as our forms, materials and desires frolic. Her combinatory practice marries the physicality of painted copper, brass sheets and cut paper with theatrical playfulness and socio-cultural reference. Mesquita's ensuing experiments result in life-size figures interacting with one another in carnivalesque vignettes that slide between Hellenistic sculpture, baroque ballet and melancholic parade. In her continued exploration between majesty and monstrosity, earthly and the manmade, the Blaffer is thrilled to present a newly commissioned, site-specific installation in 2021.

Phillip Pyle II

August 2021

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

As the fall semester kicks off at UH in 2021, Houston-based artist and designer Phillip Pyle II will orchestrate a satirical marketing campaign that mines the quirks and curiosities of the University's history. Pyle is a puckish, yet pointed graphic designer whose work marries the bombast of advertising and the irreverence of culture jamming with the poetry of art-making. Mining imagery from consumer culture and contemporary advertising to historical imagery and hip-hop, he builds a complex vision that derives from a comedic foundation and incisive wit. His guerilla campaign at UH will circulate across posters, billboards, lawn signs, YouTube, Instagram, and a plethora of other PR vehicles – embedding quiz-zical moments into otherwise familiar media.

Molly Zuckerman-Hartung: *Comic Relief*

October 2021 – February 2022

Organized by: Associate Curator Tyler Blackwell

This will be the first exhibition to survey the work of American artist and writer Molly Zuckerman-Hartung, tracing 15 years of practice through more than 50 works including painting, sculpture, drawings, writings, photographs, and

ephemera. After emerging in the 1990s as a member of the underground feminist punk movement Riot Grrrl, she became a central figure in shaping current debates about abstract painting and multidisciplinary practices. For Zuckerman-Hartung, abstraction—in all its forms, languages, and mediums—becomes the lexicon for articulating our interconnectedness within the world and with ourselves.

Martine Gutierrez: *Indigenous Woman*

November 2021 – March 2022

Organized by: Director & Chief Curator Steven Matijcio

Martine Gutierrez is a Guatemalan-American transgender artist whose photos and videos augment and alter gender, race, and ethnicity as well as long-serving ideals of beauty, desire and identity. Looking back to look forward, she is especially inspired by Aztec deities that embody opposing concepts of duality and gender-fluidity – celebrating bodies “outside of the binary.” *Indigenous Woman* is her most ambitious project to date – collecting multiple fashion shoots into a glossy, 146-page publication that mirrors Andy Warhol’s *Interview* magazine. Here, Gutierrez assumes the role of editor, writer, model, designer, ad executive, and photographer, with fictional advertising and high-fashion spreads where the artist continually reinvents herself across its pages.

Mika Rottenberg: *Cosmic Generator*

November 2021 – March 2022

Organized by: Associate Curator Tyler Blackwell

Over the last 15 years, the Argentina-born, New York-based artist Mika Rottenberg has built surreal worlds via film, video, constructed space, and sculpture. In the Fall of 2021, the Blaffer will present her fantastical work *Cosmic Generator* for the first time in Texas – connecting Houston to an imagined tunnel system between the sister cities of Mexicali, Mexico and Calexico, the Californian town on the opposite side of the border. In so doing, Rottenberg weaves documentary elements with fiction into colorful allegories about human conditions and global systems.

Goal 3: Public and educational programs targeted to the university community. For each upcoming exhibition, the museum will position visiting artists and scholars as resources for students, and orchestrate public programs, class visits, and workshops. Students, faculty, and community members gain access to leading practitioners in the fields of art, art history, and other disciplines that actively contribute to the contemporary cultural landscape. Free and informative public programs expand the horizon of intellectual engagement for students, and expose them to new ways of thinking, making, and navigating an increasingly broad ethnic diaspora around the world.

Goal 4: Increase Partnerships. (*Aligned with DSAES plan to forge and strengthen partnerships to expand reach into the greater community*). In addition to forging new partnerships with the Blaffer’s exhibition program, the Blaffer will continue to collaborate with campus departments and partners to take part in scientific research projects and community-oriented projects. In addition to providing free guided exhibition tours to K-12 school groups, the Blaffer strives to create partnerships with schools that regularly visit the museum and is expanding its online education resources to include virtual tours. We also conduct outreach to new school groups, often in conjunction with a school visit to UH and a class

assignment. Artworks created by participating K-12 students have been regularly featured in the museum's café space, drawing a wide array of audiences.

- 8. Recognizing that the potential to generate additional Student Service Fee income for FY2022 base funding is extremely limited and recognizing that it is likely that some units will not be allocated for the new base budget and/or one-time funds requested. Please provide a narrative of how your unit would accommodate a reduction of 5% in your total FY2022 base Student Service Fee budget request and provide a line-item explanation of where budgetary cuts would be made.**

In FY 22, Blaffer anticipates spending approximately \$15,000 on the two on-site student exhibitions, \$4,000 for BAMSA programming, and \$2,500 on other student-related programming. While not asking for a Base Augmentation this year, the Blaffer is still planning to expand its student-oriented programming on a long-term basis with the re-introduction of Blaffer Art and Design (B.A.D.) and expanded virtual tours and resources. The current budget covers fixed costs essential to the installation and promotion of the shows and programs, including wall painting, construction, furniture for the display of artwork, as well as publicity costs. Dedicated funds for student-centric programs are critical to the larger funding portfolio of the Blaffer, which spans a spectrum of grants, foundations, individual patrons, and endowments.

If there were a 5% budget reduction to our base fee of \$21,500, the reduced amount of \$1,075 could—with difficulty—be absorbed in the installation costs of the two student exhibitions. This will be a challenge because all of the costs incurred with these exhibitions are fixed expenses including building and painting walls, constructing exhibition display furniture, and purchasing the miscellaneous hardware required to present the work. The Blaffer could downsize these shows by re-allocating the modestly sized Saleri Gallery (located on the Museum's 2nd Floor) as storage space for an upcoming exhibition. This accommodation would reduce installation costs, but also the amount of artwork on display.

- 9. What are the other possible sources of funding available to your unit and what efforts are being made to access them (e.g. grants, donations, etc.)? If you receive funds from other sources, please briefly describe the source, purpose, and duration of the funding and report the amounts received in the appropriate rows/columns on the SFAC Spreadsheet.**

The Blaffer is responsible for raising all of the funds required to produce exhibitions, performances, educational programs, and publications. University support is limited to facility operations and partial salary and benefit support. As such, the Blaffer actively works to gather outside resources such as grants from public agencies, private foundations, and individual support to continue operations and present our ambitious program. These funds are systematically pursued throughout the year via grant applications, direct mail campaigns, and with the support of our Advisory Board and colleagues in the KGMCA. However, these funds are often marked as restricted use for exhibitions and are unavailable for student exhibitions and programs. External funding from charitable foundations for exhibitions of student work is not available either. SFAC funding is the only resource devoted specifically to the UH student programming and exhibitions. The Blaffer staff prioritizes the importance of the School of Art's student exhibitions and is committed to providing a professional level of service and expertise. There is a significant amount of time and effort spent to achieve the high standard of presentation expected. The museum is truly appreciative of the support from the Student Fees Advisory Committee, which is a vital resource in the presentation of these two exhibitions, BAMSA, and student-related activities.

10. Please describe any services that are similar to yours and/or any overlap between your unit and any other unit(s) providing services to students and the rationale for the overlap.

The Blaffer Art Museum is the only professional art museum on the main campus at the University of Houston and is open to all without an admission fee. We present innovative exhibitions of contemporary art and educational programs that are relevant and intellectually stimulating to the university community. By curating a program that brings together national and international artists with the work of UH students, the Blaffer creates a vital bridge that is unique to this campus and a platform for future success. The Blaffer works in a dedicated manner to provide high quality programs for the entire student body, from student social events to working with professors incorporating museum exhibitions into their respective syllabi. The Blaffer regularly collaborates with other UH units to create or enhance programs for maximum impact on campus. Past academic collaborators have included: College of Engineering, School of Art, School of Theatre and Dance, The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts, as well as various departments in the College of Education, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the Honors College, the Hilton College, and the Bauer College of Business. Recent or current non-academic collaborators have included the UH Public Art Collection, Jenkins Art and Architecture Library, UH Libraries (Special Collections), Office of Human Relations Work/Life and POWER UP programs, Dean of Students, Student Center, and Student Program Board.

Energized by new leadership in FY20, the Blaffer has taken on an expanded role in the Katherine G. McGovern College of the Arts (KGMCA) and, by extension, in student life. With new programming directions, the Blaffer will work to align its exhibitions and interpretive programs with the units in the KGMCA and with diverse fields of learning. This year's program includes the 44th year of the School of Art *Master of Fine Art Thesis Exhibition* as well as the *Annual Student Exhibition*. BAMS will continue to grow in its role in the campus community by operating virtually this year, initiating new programs and enriching the arts amongst students. We are proud of our place as an educational resource for all UH students, connecting the student community to exhibitions at the vanguard of artistic innovation. The Blaffer is thrilled to act as a means for curriculum enhancement, to showcase student exhibitions and expertise, and to inspire the creativity vital in today's world.